

Friends of the Spit

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Inside:
- Marine Terminal
would make a
great Discovery
Centre!!!
- Important TRCA
information session

**Peg Lush, activist, environmentalist,
Friend of the Spit, lady.** 1918 - 2005

IN MEMORY OF
PEGGY LUSH
ENVIRONMENTALIST
*Fitting tribute to a great
environmentalist, this
simple but meaningful
plaque was installed in
front of her house.*

Peg was one of those rare individuals on whom you could always count to lend a hand, however many other projects she had on the go. She cheerfully responded to all our calls for volunteers, always worried she was not doing enough. Thank you Peg. You were a great Friend. We are all the better for having known you.

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2006

AS AN EDITORIAL

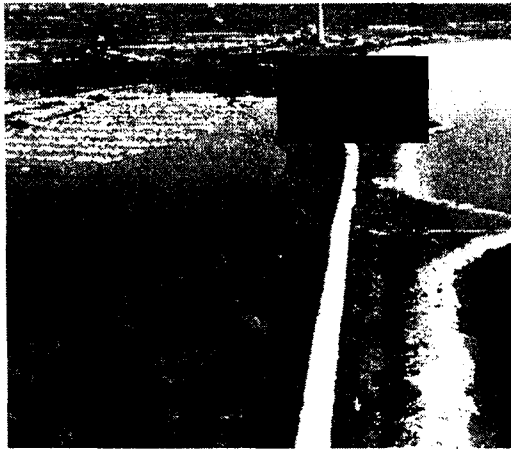
This issue was meant to be a "catch-up" one, with a number of informative items about various events on and around the Spit. The previous two issues, we recognize, were rather heavy-going.

Unfortunately, continuing disturbing new developments in the very sad story of Parks Canada incomprehensible fixation on destroying Toronto's only Public Urban Wilderness, have reared another ugly head — see the article at right.

Of note for this issue is a rare opportunity to get first hand information about the implementation by The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority of the Spit Master Plan. We recommend strongly you attend this important event and speak up directly to TRCA representatives. See all the details on page 2.

Parks Canada still "gung ho" on the Spit

Preferred site for Discovery Centre is on a prime Spit location. Parks Canada wants to "peel back the layers" to understand the region's "spectacular landscape" (i.e. for the Spit, landfill, rubble and construction debris!!!).



A bird's eyes view of what a Discovery Centre at Parks Canada's preferred site on the Spit will create.

30,000 ft² building
(approx.)

Acres of additional
"landscaped grounds"

Access road & parking

Service facilities

With great imagination and vision, borne in the shadows of the Ottawa Parliament buildings, Parks Canada are busily setting out to destroy one of the most prized people/nature refuges in the GTA. Oblivious of the community wishes, they proceed with THEIR dreams, regardless of the sensitivities of Torontonians.

They act as if the Spit at Parks Canada's preferred location is the only site in town, whereas people with vision have suggested at least four possible great sites, all off the

Spit but within the Portlands.

One of these, which has great potential lately is the Toronto Port Authority ex-Marine Terminal at Cherry Beach (see next page). This would be a prime location.

The graphic at left tries to illustrate what would happen should this Discovery Centre be built on the Spit: DISASTER — as you can imagine.

We are still working hard attempting to turn the tide of minds set on concrete, construction and debris...



Letters from members are always appreciated

We receive many letters and comments from our members, and these are always appreciated. This letter is quite extraordinary and we thought you would enjoy reading it.

"The Spit is probably the only terrestrial site within a hundred square miles of Toronto City Hall where one can instantly experience that sense of freedom from human artifacts. A place where one can commune with sky, water, land, plants and animals without a human-provided intermediary or infrastructure.

"Why ruin a proven good thing with human artifacts?"

"Your editorial drives this point home clearly and successfully. Thanks."

J.H., Toronto, Ontario*

*To protect members privacy, full names are never mentioned

"The Spit is probably the only terrestrial site within a hundred square miles of Toronto City Hall where one can instantly experience that sense of freedom from human artifact".

INFORMATION SESSION on the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Implementation Project

Tommy Thompson Park, (the Spit) has evolved into one of the most significant biological wonders on Toronto's waterfront. This urban wilderness park has been managed by Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) since the early 1970s, attracting well over 300,000 visitors annually.

The **Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan**, which will protect natural areas and enhance public recreation opportunities, is being actively implemented by TRCA with the approval of the Ministry of the Environment. An \$8 million funding partnership between TRCA and the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation will go towards rolling out key components of the plan, including new habitat creation and the construction of park infrastructure.

The enhancements are slated to begin this spring and be completed by spring 2008.

The public is invited to come learn about the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Implementation Project at its upcoming information session:

DATE: Tuesday March 21, 2006

AGENDA: 6:00-6:30pm Open House

6:30-7:30pm Presentation

7:30-8:00pm Question Period

8:00-9:00pm Wrap Up

LOCATION: Gymnasium, Harbourfront Community Centre/Waterfront School, 627 Queen's Quay West

FOR INFO: Please contact Alex Phillips at aphillips@trca.on.ca or 416-661-6600 ext. 5305

Toronto and Region Conservation's vision is for The Living City, a new kind of community where human settlement can flourish forever as part of nature's beauty and diversity. For more information on The Living City, visit www.trca.on.ca.

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Ex-TPA Marine Terminal ideal site

The site of the now defunct ferry to Rochester would be the perfect location for building a Discovery Centre

It offers spectacular views of the city and the lake. It is located at the west end of Lake Ontario Park, the part that the Toronto Waterfront Regeneration Corporation intends to develop into a park first. It has hectares of land...

All it needs is a planner with imagination, who sees the enormous possibilities, and elected representatives willing to rein in the Toronto Port Authority (TPA). The latest TPA scheme is to use the terminal for a certain type of lake cruising boats. So far, the operators are very cool to this idea!!!



What terminal?

Sorry, we can't show you the building in question. The very day the demise of the ferry was announced, the TPA was busy erasing every trace of its existence on the Internet and elsewhere.

Christmas Bird Count

The 2005 Count took place on December 18th. Naturally, one of the routes surveyed is the Spit.

In reasonable temperatures (-2° C) on an overcast day, 40 species were counted on the Spit, the baselands, and the Treatment Plant grounds. Highlights were a single Barred Owl along the Spine Road near Peninsula C, a Great Horned Owl on Peninsula C, and a Long-eared Owl on the Baselands near the Sewage Plant. Long-tailed Ducks were the most numerous at 1060, Redhead ducks were second at 788. As might be expected, land birds were reasonably scarce, but nine Golden-crowned Kinglets were counted, along with 29 American Tree Sparrows. This season, many visitors have commented on the large numbers of Snow Buntings, however, on this count date, only ten were seen. Although a Snowy Owl has been sporadically reported this winter, it was not seen on the day of the count.

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January Duck Count

Approximately three weeks later, the Lake Ontario Mid-Winter Waterfowl Inventory, took place. In its 60th year, this is a Ministry of Natural Resources initiative to census all the ducks on Lake Ontario, from Niagara-on-the-Lake through to Kingston.

This year at the Spit, in sunny and very benign conditions, 18 species of waterfowl were recorded, totalling 7209 individuals. The highest count was Greater Scaup, at 2340, followed by Redhead, at 1632. Close behind were Long-tailed Ducks, at 1604. Among the good finds were 2 Canvasback, 2 Shovelers, and 2 Green-winged Teal.

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For both these surveys, the counters were accompanied by a TRCA representative. The data compiled is used in both cases for large ongoing scientific databases. The Christmas Bird Count information is collected continent wide and is published yearly through the American Birding Association. The duck census reports are compiled through the MNR with the assistance of the various local birding clubs who undertake these counts. The information becomes part of a continent wide survey coordinated by the US Fish and Wildlife service.